

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 NEAE-00 IO-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01 AID-05

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P R 261305Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2477

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PEKING

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A Z NEW DELHI 15802

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, UR, BG

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON BANGLADESH

1. DURING A LUNCHEON CONVERSATION NOVEMBER 26 THE SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR INDICATED TO AN EMBOFF THAT HE HAD JUST HEARD ON ALL-INDIA RADIO THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV. THE SOVIET OFFICER EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT THIS DEVELOPMENT SAYING THAT KEWAL SINGH'S MEETING WITH KOSYGIN HAD ONLY BEEN ARRANGED BY THE SOVIETS AT STRONG GOI

URGING. HE CLAIMED THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN DELHI HAD ONLY RECOMMENDED TO MOSCOW THAT IT ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS WITH DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO, FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER PATOLICHEV (APPARENTLY SCHEDULED FOR A VISIT TO DELHI IN THE NEAR FUTURE) AND KOSYGIN, AMONG SEVERAL OTHERS. ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF
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THE BREZHNEV MEETING, THE SOVIET EXPLAINED THAT NO HIGH GOI OF-

FICIAL HAD BEEN RECEIVED SINCE THE DECLARATION OF THE EMERGENCY, AND HE BELIEVED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO IMPRESS ON THE GOI ITS CONFIDENCE IN MRS. GANDHI. AS TO THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BANGLADESH, THE SOVIET WAS NOT PREPARED TO SPECULATE ALTHOUGH HE SAID KEWAL SINGH WOULD CERTAINLY EXCHANGE IDEAS ON THE SUBJECT DURING HIS STAY IN MOSCOW.

2. THE SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT HIS AMBASSADOR HAD HAD MEETINGS IN DELHI WITH BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN AND FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH ON BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS. HE WOULD NOT ELABORATE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE

MEETINGS, BUT HE SAID THERE WAS A VIEW HELD BY "SOME INDIANS" HERE THAT THE USG WAS THE ONLY POWER IN A POSITION TO REASSURE THE INDIANS ABOUT BANGLADESH. HE HIMSELF THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS THE USG AND THE GOI WERE WORKING TOGETHER TO QUIET THE SITUATION DOWN. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL DISCUSSED VARIOUS RUMORS HE HAD HEARD SUGGESTING GOI PREPARATIONS TO INTERVENE, AND SAID "A FRIENDLY EMBASSY" OFFICIAL TOLD HIM OF A COMPLAINT BY THE BANGLADESH HIGH MISSION MILITARY ATTACHE IN EARLY NOVEMBER THAT SUCH INTERVENTION WAS IMMINENT. ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF BANGLADESHI COMMUNISTS IN RECENT MONTHS, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT SOME HAD BEEN LIVING IN MOSCOW SINCE THE AUGUST 15 COUP.

3. THE SOVIET EMBOFF'S COMMENTS ON BANGLADESH WERE GENERALLY LOW-KEY AND HE BETRAYED NO DEEP CONCERN AT RECENT EVENTS. HE ADMITTED HOWEVER THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD TO LOOK AT BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT WITH CHINESE MOTIVATIONS AND INTERESTS VERY MUCH IN MIND BECAUSE OF PEKING'S "ACUTE ANTI-SOVIETISM" OF RECENT MONTHS. HE SEEMED TO ENDORSE THE VIEW THAT THERE WAS A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OCTOBER 20 SINO-INDIAN BORDER INCIDENT AND THE BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENTS, ALTHOUGH HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT INDIAN OFFICIALS DIVIDED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL ON THIS VERY QUESTION. (THE MEA OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS TOLD AN EMBOFF IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION NOVEMBER 26 THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WAS ANY PLAUSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN BANGLADESH EVENTS AND THE OCTOBER 20 BORDER INCIDENT.) THE SOVIET OFFICER CLAIMED TO BE UNAWARE OF THE SHOOTING INCIDENT AT THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION AT THE TIME OF THE LUNCHEON.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE15802
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750411-1142
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975117/aaaaafst.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON BANGLADESH
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, IN, UR, BG, (SINGH, KEWAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006